

Good evening. And thank you, Faruq, for your introduction. My choice of subject this evening is intended as my farewell to Chicago, where I've spent two winter quarters. I have acquired a certain affection for the city and the campus. And it occurred to me that I might demonstrate that affection by choosing a topic that ties Chicago to the Middle East, much as this Center does. As it happens, I have just such a subject up my sleeve. These are the political adventures in the Arab world of a native Chicagoan, Charles Richard Crane. Some of you may immediately place the Crane name. The famous King-Crane Commission, sent by Woodrow Wilson to Syria and Palestine in 1919 will most readily come to mind -- it is, indeed, the same Crane. Vera Beard, our ever-alert secretary, immediately associated the name with bathroom fixtures -- that is also the same Crane. Those who are native to Chicago and know something about the history of its industry, politics and philanthropy may also have encountered the name.

This evening I hope to make you aware of still another context. Charles Crane of Chicago was the first American friend of Arab nationalism. Indeed, in the 1920's and 1930's, when the United States had yet to immerse itself in the affairs of the Middle East, Charles Crane ^{became} quite famous in Arab nationalist circles, where he enjoyed the title of "Friend of the Arabs."

This evening I want to look at how this came about, and especially consider a number of adventures and misadventures that sealed this friendship.

My interest in Crane is not self-standing. For some years now I've collected materials on a score of such foreign friends of Arab nationalism in its early period. I've long been fascinated as to why some persons so ardently embrace the political claims of a nation not their own. Given the fact that the interests of nations invariably clash, this usually involves a choice. Having made a choice, such persons are often led to deny the political claims of whatever nation is embattled with their favorite, be it their own or some other. They become partisans, who project ^{themselves} ~~emotions~~ on Greeks, Turks, Jews, Arabs, Persians, Kurds, Armenians. The origins of such choices are complex, and lie at the meeting points of culture, experience, and individual psychology. I'll return to this broader theme in my conclusion; but keep in mind the matter of motive as I briefly present Charles Crane, my only American case.

Charles Crane was born in Chicago in 1858. His father had arrived three years earlier from New Jersey, where a depression had left him unemployed. In Chicago Crane's father opened a brass castings foundry, which soon expanded into the manufacture of pipes, fittings, steam heating systems, iron castings, and elevators. As the oldest of nine children, Charles was expected

to enter the business, and he began to apprentice at the age of 10. But when he graduated high school in 1877, he was afflicted by a malady, diagnosed in the language of the day as chronic nerve exhaustion. Sudden attacks of this illness cut short his subsequent studies, first in engineering, then in medicine. He never attained any degree. In those days, the usual cure for such maladies was travel. Crane's father had the money, and this permitted him to travel quite extensively.

Crane's earliest travel took him to the lands of Islam. In 1878, at the age of 20, he had passed from Egypt up the coast of Syria, visiting Jerusalem and Damascus. In Damascus he met Richard Burton, the famous explorer. But his general impressions of the land and its inhabitants, as recorded in letters to his fiancée, were not favorable. From Damascus he wrote that it was "the neatest and pleasantest place in either Palestine or Syria. There are no other towns, villages or hamlets (not excepting Jerusalem) fit for even animals to live in. The country is the worst for vermin in the world." Although the Sea of Galilee was beautiful, he vowed "I will never take the same trip through Palestine again." ~~Athens he found "a pretty fair sort of place,~~ But perhaps even a problem in algebra or a box of blacking would look interesting after Syria -- that was a mental fast." The impressions of that first trip must have remained with him: Crane would not return to these parts for 30 years.

It was old Russia which cast its spell over Crane. He became a Slavophile above all else, and until the repeated waves of revolution swept over the country, Crane most often set his compass for Russian travel. His special fascination lie with the Orthodox Church and its monasteries. From the 1880s, he divided his time between nuturing the Crane family business, and nearly annual visits to Russia. It was here, by the way, that he would eventually make his most notable contribution to the University of Chicago. In 1900, Crane brought William Rainey Harper with him to Russia, to recruit lecturers for a lectureship he endowed in "Russian Literature and Institutions." The visitor would be referred to in the University Bulletin as the "Crane Lecturer." Crane later financed the position of Samuel Harper, son of William Rainey Harper, at this University. His generosity made it possible for the young Harper to split his time between Chicago and Russia -- two quarters a year in each setting. Politically, he identified strongly with Russia against Japan, and would often dash off missives to newspapers and politicians. After Russia's defeat at Japan's hands, he also became a strong supporter of China, as a counter to Japanese influence. At the same time, he was still very much tied to the family business, and was also involved in the Chicago Municipal Voter's League and the project of municipal reform.

Crane did not reappear in the Middle East until the winter of 1909. When he did so, it was to find refuge. Crane had been

named by Taft as minister to China, a major political appointment. The Chicago and national press lauded him, he received a great sendoff. But upon his arrival in San Francisco, he was suddenly recalled. A dilettante in diplomacy, he'd done some indiscreet Japan-bashing to a journalist, embarrassing the Administration. Humiliated, he retreated with his family to Cairo this time, where he devoted himself to "studying Mohammedan politics, especially in relation to the Pan-Islamic movement." It was a chance to while the time and take stock. A new interest in Islam was kindled in Egypt -- but not a consuming one. "Of course, it is not Russia," he lamented, "and the people here -- of whatever nationality -- have not the same clarity of vision, the same gift of expression, the same sympathy which prompts the effort to make things clear^a, symmetrical and satisfying -- as the good Russians. There are, though, some excellent Russians here."

His bitter experience with the Taft Administration brought him eventually to change parties, and on his return he moved gradually from the Republican to the Democratic column. In 1912 he endorsed Woodrow Wilson for the presidency. There was no particular chemistry between them, but Crane contributed to Wilson's campaign and he constituted a political asset in Illinois. In 1913, the new President Wilson offered Crane the ambassadorship to Moscow. After some hesitation, Crane declined -- he was at the time involved in a family tussle for control of the business following his father's death. This finally ended in

1914, when he sold out to his brother for an handsome sum. He now intended to give himself over wholeheartedly to his hobby of world travel and politics. Unfortunately, war and then revolution in Russia clouded his horizon. He would visit Russia once more as part of an American mission in mid-1917. Following the Bolshevik Revolution, Crane would not see the country again for 20 years.

We should pause here and review Crane's Arab and Jewish commitments, following a war that would now decide the fate of the region. His interest in Islam had grown after his 1909 visit to Egypt and Syria. Subsequently he had befriended the Dutch Orientalist Snouck Hurgronje, of Leiden, who had persuaded Crane to provide financial support for the Encyclopaedia of Islam -- what we now call the first edition. Crane also arranged Snouck's lecture series in America, where the Orientalist gave the lectures that would later constitute his book Mohammedanism, and he stayed with Crane here in Chicago. But this was still a mediated interest: he had no sustained contact with anyone in the Arab lands, and no independent knowledge of political and social developments. Snouck would write him occassionally with information on such important wartime issues as the Caliphate and the Arab Revolt.

As for the Jews, he did have direct contact, of an ambivalent sort. On the one hand, there were Jews he greatly

admired. In 1913, in a letter to Wilson, he unsuccessfully recommended Professor Richard Gottheil of Columbia, one of his "best finds" and "the finest Jew I know," for the customarily Jewish post of American ambassador to Turkey. The Jews, he once noted, were fervent defenders of the Turks, "so a Jewish ambassador does better at Constantinople than elsewhere and political obligations to the Jews are always more or less paid by sending a good Jew there. The Jews seem to be a natural bridge between Europe and Asia." Gottheil was known as an ardent Zionist.

Later Crane would say that, before 1919, he too had been a Zionist. Some scant evidence of that might be found in a 1914 meeting between Crane and President Wilson. According to Crane, they discussed "the situation of the Jews of the world and what we should try to do for them when peace comes. This I had gone over with Mr. Brandeis on my last visit with him. He is fast becoming the most important Jew in the world. For a long time he was mostly interested in American social problems but, when he was at our house about a year ago, he became inspired with longing to serve his race and especially the poorest and most down-trodden." Just what they discussed as a post-war solution for the Jews, it's impossible to say. In 1916, Crane added his voice to those urging that Wilson appoint Brandeis to the Supreme Court.

There were, however, other American Jews whom he greatly resented, principally for their campaigns against the mistreatment of Russian Jewry. He identified this effort with the financier Jacob Schiff, who emerges as a bete noire in much of his correspondence. When the Revolution came in 1917, Crane linked the Jewish financiers to the Jewish revolutionaries in one grand conspiracy. In his unpublished memoirs he wrote: "Although Trotsky was supposed to be on the other end of the scale from the great bankers of Israel, he nevertheless had had a secret meeting with the chief of them and started off well financed for his venture." He'd seen Trotsky in Halifax, removed by the police from shipboard, and his preoccupation with Communist, atheistic Jews would grow like a cancer after the Revolution.

In 1919, Crane reappeared in the Arab world, and would remain prominent in the Arab eye for 20 years, until his death in 1939. It should be remembered that the period of Crane's keen interest in the Arabs spanned the last quarter of his life, from ages 61 to 81. He still had tremendous stamina, and would undertake journeys, including one notable trek through Yemen, which would defy the powers of younger men. But no one can read his letters and memoirs without detecting that hardening of opinions and prejudices that comes with old age. In any event, I want to touch upon his principal initiatives during this period very briefly, for they would undoubtedly contribute to the Arab perception of the United States in a period when America was

still very distant from the Middle East.

Crane reentered the Arab world as a member of the famous King-Crane Commission in 1919. Of this commission, I will say little. There is a well-known book by Harry Howard devoted to the subject. In brief, this was to have been an Inter-Allied Commission to ascertain the aspirations of the peoples of the Near East -- that part that was in contention, in the aftermath of the Ottoman defeat. When the British and French pulled out of the plan, the Americans were left to go it alone. Wilson appointed two commissioners. Henry Churchill King was president of Oberlin. He was an evangelist and educator-missionary, with ties to Colonel House, Wilson's intimate advisor. It would seem Crane was a political choice of the Democratic Party. Wilson would state that he appointed both men because they knew "nothing" about Syria. While this may have been true, the two men were ^{not} ~~hardly~~ blank slates.

The commission's method of ascertaining aspirations was the collection of petitions. Now we know today, from the wealth of available archival evidence just how fragmented Syria and Palestine were after the war. Some of that fragmentation was sectarian, some of it was intra- and inter-elite. Yet to read the King-Crane report is to come away with the impression of a striking unanimity of opinion. It reported, in the end, "the overwhelming desire ... for the United States as mandatory in

most of the Near East." It is difficult to determine today how this conclusion was reached. Certainly some Arab flattery of the two Americans was involved. Still, the Muslim majority would have oppose any foreign tutelage. When asked which power they preferred as mandatory, Muslims in Hebron told the commission they wished only for the rule of God. Among aware Muslims, the strong missionary element of the American presence, especially in Syria, would have been held against the United States. Maronites wanted a French mandate, which they expected would consolidate their position vis-a-vis the Muslims. Jews preferred the British, who had given them the Balfour Declaration. How, then, did King-Crane reach its particular conclusion? ~~It would seem~~ ~~that~~ that in purely numerical terms, the great majority of petitions came from (non-Maronite) Christian Arabs, both in Palestine and Syria. Many already had an American connection, through emigration, missionary work, or the Syrian Protestant College.

My sense is that this preponderance ~~obviously~~ reflected the extensive missionary connections of King, less the biases of Crane. In the end, the commission produced a document that echoed the soon-to-vanish influence of Christian Arab nationalism of the American-schooled kind. The document was so anti-French that the U.S. government suppressed it, lest it complicate American relations with France over a Syria it had no intention of claiming. The suppression later made the document famous, rather more for its anti-Zionist than its anti-French thrust.

It also made Crane famous in the Arab world, although Crane actually had the lesser influence on the formation of the report. King's name rightly comes first, because his missionary links guided the petitioning of the commission and the demand for an American mandate. Crane had no such connections. He was a budding enthusiast of Islam, but had no network of ties in the region. But for the same reason, King's subsequent links with the Arab world would never develop beyond the missionary realm. Crane, on the other hand, would break the familiar association of America with mission, and occupy a place in Muslim awareness. On this account, it would be Crane, not King, by whom the commission would be remembered. ^{in the Arab world} And his duty as commissioner fastened Crane's interest upon the Arab world as never before. Over the next twenty years until his death, it would become his great fascination -- a substitute for a Russia lost to Bolshevism.

There would be a brief interlude: in 1920 President Wilson appointed him minister to China, and this time the mission went off without a hitch. His year in China was possibly his most successful venture in diplomacy. He only intended to keep the post for a year, and in 1921 he resigned. Arnold Toynbee, by the way, relates a typical story about Crane's Chinese interests. "He had just acquired a collection of records of Chinese Buddhist hymns, and he was going to play them over to ^{Chinese} ~~the~~ students to observe their reactions. He had invited all the Chinese students that there were to be found in Cook County. Of course I came

again, and it was all as Mr. Crane had foretold. The hymns were droning; the students were crowding round to listen." This same ~~kind of~~ collecting odd experiences would ^{continue} ~~now find expression in~~ among the Arabs, who became his full-time concern upon his return from China.

Crane's involvement with the Arabs during these years may be divided into three broad categories, which in some ways overlap. The first was his round-about support for the Arab struggle against the French and British mandates in Syria and Palestine. The second was his attempt to promote the unity of Islam, and to forge a common religious front of Islam and Christianity against the Jews. The third was his direct support for the rulers of Arabia, and the economic development of the peninsula -- arguably his most significant endeavor. These efforts often overlapped, and together they formed a more or less consistent campaign on behalf of the political claims of Arabism, and to some extent the religious claims of Islam.

The first was his round-about support for the Arab struggle against the French and British mandates in Syria and Palestine. I say round-about because Crane himself did not rise up to lament either French or British policy in a public way. He wasn't much of a public speaker, and the extent examples of his writing are mediocre at best. This was not the way he made his influence felt. What he did do was take advantage of opportunities where

his very presence, and especially his financial resources, could make his argument for him.

The French learned this the hard way in 1922, when Crane visited Damascus as a private citizen. During his 1919 visit, Damascus had been the capital of a rather wobbly Arab state under Faysal. Faysal was driven out by the French while Crane was in China, and all of Syria was now under French control. Now the King-Crane report had been a strongly anti-French document, hardly the sort of thing one wartime ally could present to another. It had been suppressed and never published by the U.S. government, and the French authorities in Damascus were only vaguely aware of its contents. They took no special precautions surrounding the return visit of this former American minister.

The resulting explosion is well-documented in American and French official sources. Crane in Damascus acted like a magnet for Arab nationalist circles, who quickly formed around his hotel and transformed his every appearance into a rally. As Crane would put it, he was not making political speeches, only "telling stories." But his audiences supplied the missing indictment of the French, and on his departure from Damascus, on his way from hotel to train station, he was accompanied by 700 persons who began to shout slogans against the French mandate and for independence. This demonstration wound past the French headquarters in Damascus, and the French were powerless to act --

at least on that day. But the following day they arrested a dozen leading Arab nationalists, foremost among them Abd al-Rahaman Shahbandar, who had been Faysal's minister of foreign affairs. While Crane reached Beirut, counter-demonstrations followed, troops fired on demonstrators. Those arrested were court-martialed, and the French waved a check for \$1,000 written by Crane to Shahbandar as proof of his support for the "rebels."

In point of fact, Crane did not incite against the French. What he failed to appreciate was that both Arabs and French regarded him as some sort of official agent, and that he had walked into a storm. Others would pay, and indeed there were Syrians who could be heard to remark after his visit that either the Americans should come out on behalf of an independent Syria, or stay out altogether. Visits such as Crane's only caused them trouble. Crane himself would make no more visits to Damascus: the French were ever-vigilant thereafter to keep him out. In 1933, they even made strong demarches to assure that a ship carrying Crane would not dock in Beirut. His support for nationalist claims had made him persona non grata.

Although Syria was closed to him, ^{the ~~British~~ side Arab world} Palestine was not, and Crane began to direct his round-about support for the Arab cause through ^{other} ~~these still-open~~ channels. In 1922, he secured official assent to publication of the King-Crane report. More important was Crane's visit, in 1923, to King Husayn of the Hijaz -- the

man who had negotiated the terms of the Arab revolt. For Crane it was his first visit to Arabia, and there he found the old ways he would increasingly come to ^{re/05/7.8}romanticize. Although he hadn't thought that much of the old ways in 1878, the memory of the vermin had passed, and in his letters he had begun to lament what he called the "blight of modernity" that had descended upon the Arab world. Cairo, Damascus, and Istanbul had all lost their "cachet." But in Arabia he found what he was looked for. "At Jiddah and around the Holy Cities western influence is resented and resisted to the ^{1st} degree and it is still possible to get glimpses of the picturesque old life."

It was possible also to get a glimpse of certain documents. King Husayn was then embroiled in a hopeless dispute with the British over wartime promises, particularly regarding Palestine. He held that the British had included Palestine in territories destined for Arab independence; the British, in turn, claimed to have excluded it. The arguments of both sides rested upon contradictory readings of diplomatic correspondence conducted during the war.

King Husayn seized the opportunity of Crane's visit to spread some of this correspondence before him, and the evidence made a profound impression. According to Crane, "the old gentleman" produced two letters written to him in 1915 by the British Commissioner in Egypt, Sir Henry McMahon. Iⁿ these

letters, McMahon promised Husayn that Britain would support the independence of an undivided Arab kingdom, embracing Arabia and including Syria and Palestine. On Crane's return to America, he told a State Department official that one of the letters^e placed before him specifically guaranteed the inclusion of Syria and Palestine in an "undivided Arab kingdom." "There was no doubt at all about these communications as Hussein showed them to me when I was in Jedda." For years to come, Crane would offer himself as a witness to the contents of the letters, which had not yet been published in full.

Now ~~of course~~ Crane knew no Arabic, the language of the correspondence. He relied strictly upon Husayn's word as to the letters' contents. And Husayn, not to complicate matters, kept Crane ignorant of the limiting provisions and nuances of this most complex exchange of pledges. Crane was left in the dark about the now well-known reservation made by McMahon: "Portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo cannot be said to be purely Arab, and should be excluded from the limits demanded" for Arab independence. This caveat had already given rise to a controversy in diplomatic circles: Did it, or did it not, exclude Palestine? But Husayn did not wish to cloud his presentation with ambiguity. And so in Crane's version, Husayn had written McMahon asking "Does that include Palestine and Syria?" McMahon replied that "that includes Palestine and Syria." Crane later realized that things

were not so simple; in his unpublished memoirs, he wrote that one of the letters included "reservations as to certain parts of Syria." But this he learned only some years later from George Antonius, who translated the letters that had been in Husayn's possession for publication in The Arab Awakening. In the meantime, Crane told all who would listen that the British had explicitly and unambiguously pledged Syria and Palestine to the Arabs.

I've mentioned George Antonius: Crane's support of Antonius would be another round-about form of support for the Arab challenge to the British mandate. Crane decided in the 1930s that he had to give his interest in foreign affairs some institutionalized form -- a conclusion that led to his creation of the Institute of Current World Affairs. This Institute still exists in a ^{NH. reduced} ~~vestigial~~ state, much diminished by a poor investment strategy over the years; in Crane's day, it had its headquarters in New York, and had quite a bit more money. When George Antonius decided to leave the Palestine administration, Crane made him a full-time fellow of the Institute, and it was as a fellow that Antonius researched and wrote The Arab Awakening. On the significance of this book, for the Arab nationalist cause, particularly through its analysis of British commitments, I need not dwell. Return to the book, you will find it dedicated to Crane, "named Haroun al-Rashid, affectionately." During the 1930s, Antonius was very much Crane's interpreter and guide in

the Arab world. He would assure that Crane met the people he meant to meet, and that Crane's money would flow to worthy recipients.

Through Antonius, Crane contributed to the restoration of the Haram in Jerusalem, and would often send checks to Hajj Amin al-Husayni, Mufti of Palestine, for whatever purposes he saw fit. Through Antonius he gave money to Rashid Rida to distribute free copies of his books throughout the Islamic world. And through Antonius he would later present the 1931 Jerusalem Islamic congress with a portrait of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani -- "a genuine photograph bearing the Master's autograph." (Crane had "discovered" and marked Afghani's unknown grave in Istanbul five years earlier -- setting the stage for an unseemly squabble between Afghanistan and Iran over the bones in 1945, when roadworks in Istanbul required their disinternment. The remains beneath the great ^{Afghan} mausoleum that stands ^{today} in Kabul were the ones identified by Crane, with as much exactitude as his understanding of the correspondence over Palestine. But that's a story for another day.)

Crane never made himself persona non grata in Palestine, where he was closely managed by Antonius. And the British had a more ^{relaxed} ~~discerning~~ view of the man than the French. For the British, he was, in the words of one consul, "ethically sentimental and politically romantic. Nothing will stop Mr.

Crane from interesting himself in other people's affairs, but his intentions are not mischievous." Only briefly, during the Arab Revolt that erupted in 1936, did the British become concerned that his humanitarian contributions were going to the "rebels," or freeing up other funds for the uprising. But they took no action.

Over Palestine, Crane took no ~~strictly political~~ initiatives of his own, leaving it to his stipendiaries -- with one exception. Here we come to his second field of activity, the attempt to promote the unity of Islam and forge a common religious front of Islam and Christianity against the Jews. Crane was a Unitarian, who throughout his life had an eclectic interest in religions, as Toynbee's story about the Buddhist hymns indicates. He had also been generous in his giving to Russian Orthodox institutions, including those in Palestine. But after 1919, this broad interest began to focus upon Islam. In 1922, he set out "to establish some kind of contact with the desert Mohammedan tribes and especially with the most interesting of all Mohammedan sects, the Senussi." In Cairo he fell under the spell of the Shaykh al-Azhar, Mustafa al-Maraghi, whom he went so far as to declare suitable for the caliphate. Later he would fix upon the "Unitarians of the Desert," led by Ibn Saud. Clearly, Crane was groping, aware of the latent power of Islam, but hopelessly handicapped by a superficial understanding of it.

At the same time, he blossomed in old age into a full-fledged anti-Semite. What he regarded as the manifest power of the "modern, pushing Jew" had to be battled, in the great struggle of the faiths. This produced his strange initiative for a common Catholic-Islamic front -- the first known instance, to my mind, of what has come to be called the Islamo-Christian dialogue.

In a 1933 conversation with the Mufti of Palestine, Hajj Amin al-Husayni, he had asked whether there was any contact between Islam and Catholicism. As Russia had demonstrated, the political Jews everywhere aimed at the destruction of religious life. The only church in the West alert to the danger was the Catholic church. Could the vital forces of Catholicism and Islam unite to defend themselves? According to the notes of the meeting, taken by Antonius, the Mufti saw the force of Crane's remarks, but regretted that relations between Islam and Catholicism were not particularly close. Hardly any wonder, ~~to~~ ^{one} might add: sentiment in the Islamic world was still reeling from the triumphalist Catholicism celebrated during the centenary of French rule in Algeria.

This did not deter Crane, and he took his initiative to Cairo. Present in this conclave were Sayyid Rashid Rida, the famous editor of the intellectual journal al-Manar; Ali Abd al-Raziq, known for his controversial tract on Islam and government;

Sayyid Abd al-Hamid al-Bakri, head of Egypt's foremost religious order; Ibn Saud's minister in Cairo; and others. The notes of the meeting were taken by George Antonius:

TEXT

The minutes indicate a polite response from the assembled Muslims, but they had some questions about whether the Catholic Church was prepared to cooperate, and on what basis. Crane said the ways and means would come later; first he would return to Rome with this message of "ready assent." As usual, Crane completely misread the mood of this meeting -- one can well imagine the discomfort his message caused, not because of its anti-Jewish content, but for its suggestion, thirty years before Vatican II, that Islam could work amicably with Catholicism for any purpose. Crane now charged forward with full steam: his son, John, resided in Rome, and he was charged with contacts at the Vatican. Antonius, who must have recognized the scheme for what it was, thought acquiescence the better part of valor, and even flattered Crane by telling him how his idea was ^{winning over} ~~making progress~~ ~~in~~ Muslim circles.

Needless to say, nothing ever came of the initiative. Crane pressed Shakib Arslan, the pan-Islamic activist living in Geneva, to come to Rome for Vatican talks. In a letter to Crane, Shakib expressed his "approval of your project, in combination with Hajj

Amin al-Husayni, Grand Mufti of Palestine, for forming a religious front against the Palestinian Jews." But he excused himself by citing his famous differences with Italy over Libya: he would have difficulty getting a visa. But the final blow was delivered by the marvelous Shaykh Maraghi, who for domestic reasons ^{then} found it opportune to stir up anti-Coptic sentiment in Egypt. As Crane complained to Antonius, "it is distressing that he got into that anti-Christian movement just as Protestantism is dead and withdrawing and I had made so much progress in getting the Catholic world toward a perfect understanding with the Moslems." Crane asked Antonius to restrain the Shaykh al-Azhar - a last bid to save an initiative of astonishing naiveté.

In his very last years, Crane would drop every inhibition, ~~of prudence~~ ^{and give conspiracy theory full reign}. For Stalin, he had nothing but praise. In 1937, he finally returned to Russia, and found that under its leader it had finally returned to being "essentially Russian." Indeed, he anticipated it would be a "high note" in world culture over the next two generations. "During the early days of the Bolshevik revolution the Jews had the dominant power and used it in a ruthless, cruel way, but at last the Jewish power in Russia has gone way down and cannot be revived." His last initiative regarding the Jews was an attempt to interest the Fuhrer in Berlin in a league with Islam. Crane would have doubtless celebrated the Molotov-von Ribbentrop agreement, had he lived to see it.

His last initiative towards Islam was his attempt to have Ibn Saud permit him to deliver the call to prayer from the Great Mosque in Mecca. He had even negotiated with engineers about the installation of a sound system to carry his voice. Ibn Saud's men were too polite to tell him no, but certainly could not say yes, either to Crane or to his sound system. They would be spared by Crane's growing infirmity. The correspondence also makes for sad reading: thirty years of fascination with Islam had imparted ^{only fragments} ~~far too little~~ understanding.

I have mentioned Arabia, and this brings me to the third field of Crane's endeavor: his support for the economic development of the peninsula. This was Crane at his best, at his most American, at his most Chicagoan. In his mutterings, Crane lamented the loss of traditional ways among the Arabs to the "blight of modernity." But almost against his will, he was an American progressive, admired among the Arabs no less for his mastery of the world of technological progress.

During his visit to King Husayn, whom Crane regarded as a "Solomon," a "real King of ancient traditions," he presented what the British consul in Jidda described as "all the material required for a bathroom. Fourteen cubic tons of this bathroom have arrived, and an American is to come from Paris to fit it up. Mr. Crane has now only to add a water supply system for the town of Jeddah, in place of the meagre and usually foul smelling

product of the condenser, to make the bathroom really worth having."

This, too, Crane would provide, after the bathroom fixtures and Jidda had changed hands. As a gift to Ibn Saud, Crane offered the services of a mining engineer, whose mission was to dig wells at Jidda that would replace the old Ottoman water supply system. Philby mediated the arrangement with the wary Ibn Saud. The engineer, K.S. Twitchell, set up a modern pump with a 16-foot windmill and auxiliary gas engine, that could raise 40 gallons a minute. At the same time, however, Twitchell began prospecting, first for minerals, later for oil. There were some tense negotiations between the engineer and the Saudi Finance Ministry, and the question of whether Crane sought any share of Twitchell's concessions arose. Crane made it quite clear to Ibn Saud that he had no interest in any Arabian mineral or oil concession. On his own, Twitchell proceeded to strike a deal and lay the foundations of the American oil network on Saudi oil. He would dedicate his book to Crane, noting that Saudi Arabia was the only country in the world whose economic development was due solely to a philanthropic impulse. One might add that Crane did more than any other man to destroy the old Arabia as he knew and admired it -- a paradox that seemed not to trouble him. Crane ~~rightly~~ assumed that "progress" was inevitable and that everyone wanted a piece of it. It simply meant that discriminating travellers like himself would have to make an ever greater effort

to find unspoilt peoples and places. ~~The approach was pure~~
~~Chicago.~~

Crane would come to venerate Ibn Saud, and would write to Roosevelt several times in his praise, especially to urge American recognition of his kingdom. It is interesting, then, to note one incident in which Crane had a close brush with the force that had carried Ibn Saud to the summit. In 1929, Crane visited Iraq, and set out with an American missionary, his son, and two chauffeured cars, for Kuwait. In 1929, the Ikhwan stilled roamed the Iraqi-Saudi frontier, in the days when the Saudis, rather than the Iraqis, were the ones pressing their frontiers forward. During their journey, the travellers saw fleeing sheperds coming in their direction, who reported Ikhwan ahead. The party decided to press forward nonetheless, and soon came under gunfire from a large mounted party of Ikhwan. The cars veered around, and made haste back to Basra -- but the missionary, seated next to Crane, had taken a bullet, and died en route. Crane arranged for support for the missionary's wife and five children, but never drew any conclusions from the deadly encounter. (Contrast with the poet Blunt, who after an equally harrowing encounter with the Senussis, wrote that he would never go any further in the direction of Islam.) Crane had obviously made up his mind, and no experience would change it.

Crane died in 1938, at the age of 80. What are we to make

of him? He was obviously a wealthy man, and one might believe he saw the Arabs as a consuming hobby. As other men or women of wealth collect more wealth or art or political offices, Crane collected rare experiences and unusual people. He was in no way profound, his knowledge of all things Arab and Islamic remained superficial -- acquired late, and outside of context. And he was a man of deep prejudices, for and against.

But I think there is more here. Toynbee ^{was} ~~is~~ another friend of Arabism, and it is interesting to quote his summation of Crane: "Charles R. Crane was a successful man, and a happy one. He did what he had wanted to do. He satisfied his curiosity. My guess is that he felt that his life had been well spent, and, if he did feel that, I declare that I agree with him." This seems a sympathetic statement, but it's neither sympathetic nor accurate. It omits Crane's domestic political disappointments, and it trivializes his foreign interests as a ^{mere} pursuit of curiosity ^{or} ~~and~~ the simple pleasures of travel.

Yet no less than Toynbee, Crane was disturbed by the course modern history had taken. No less than Toynbee, he was drawn to global conceptions of the dilemma of Western civilization, and the causes of its spreading corruption. He tended to look for the vital and corrupting in the same quarters. And it was this sense of urgency, this rage which would spill over into racism against "Japs and Jews," which would drive his wanderings as much

as curiosity. Crane was utterly incapable of articulating his distress, his naving alienation. His background denied him any facility with words. He wrote no books. But he wrote checks, and he wrote them very well -- with the purpose of finding those who could express his forbodings far better than he. ~~And~~ ^{he} he also had the shrewd sixth sense of the businessman, who knew in a practical way where to put his money. This made him, in a paradoxical way, one of Arab nationalism's most formidable friends. His investment in George Antonius paid off for forty years, in the form of The Arab Awakening. His investment in K.S. Twitchell pays off to this day, in the ways it forged the economic interdependence of the United States and an Arab state.

Like my other friends of Arab nationalism, he would seek the solution in the realm of politics. In the 19th century, there was no Arab nationalism to speak of, and no foreigners to advocate it -- only anti-modernist romantics who celebrated the desert and its "noble savages." With the Ottoman break-up, the last romantics would argue for enlightened tutelage over the Arabs -- to preserve them from the ravages of materialism. Crane did have a strand of romanticism in his vision, he could write of the "blight of modernity," but he was too American, too turn-of-the-century Chicago, to be a true romantic or anti-modern. He believed far too deeply in the virtues of politics and economic development, as they had flourished in his own city. These were good things, to which the Arabs were entitled, and he was anxious

they should have their fair share of governments and gadgetry.

He would also have been out of sorts with a post-modern form of resolving alienation: conversion, in this case to Islam. Pierre Assouline has described the recent spread of Islam among French intellectuals in his book, The New Converts. Crane was fascinated by Islam, but it is worth noting that he never contemplated conversion. While he appreciated something of Islam's spiritual dimensions, he saw it largely as a means to foster the political solidarity of Arab peoples. By his sounding the call to prayer from the Great Mosque, he thought to demonstrate his political oneness with Islam; he would not have understood that one must also accept the creed in order to mount a minaret of Mecca.

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